



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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September 25, 2003

TO: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley *tm*
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – HOUSE OF BETHESDA**

We have completed a review of the House of Bethesda Group Home. House of Bethesda is licensed with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Probation Department. House of Bethesda is a six-bed facility located in the Second Supervisorial District that provides care for children ages 10 to 17 years who exhibit social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, House of Bethesda was providing services for four Los Angeles County Probation children.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to verify that House of Bethesda is providing the services outlined in its Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues. The review included an evaluation of House of Bethesda's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with two children placed with House of Bethesda at the time of the review. The interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by House of Bethesda, and to ensure its adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

We noted a number of areas where the agency was not in compliance with its Program Statement. House of Bethesda needs to make several repairs and improvements to its facility; provide an adequate quantity of recreation equipment; include each resident and their representative in the development of the Needs and Services Plan; maintain educational documentation and ensure that each resident needing an Individualized Education Plan receives one; provide twice weekly group therapy sessions and daily living skills training; supply residents with appropriate clothing and allowances; and offer each resident a life book. Attached is a detailed report of the findings.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management has agreed to provide DCFS with a written corrective action plan within fifteen business days of this report. We thank House of Bethesda's management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Patrick McMahon at (213) 974-0729.

JTM:PM:CC

Attachment

- c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
- Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
- Public Information Office
- Audit Committee
- David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
- Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer

**House of Bethesda
14614 Firmona Ave.
Lawndale, CA 90260
310-675-1444
License No.: 191601689
Rate Classification Level: 10**

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The House of Bethesda Group Home is a six-bed residential facility for boys. The exterior of the home is nicely maintained and there are no observable safety hazards.

Inside the home, however, were several areas in need of improvement. In the kitchen under the sink, a space surrounding a pipe needs to be patched. The tile in the resident bath had a buildup of mildew around the tub; there was mildew on the floor near the tub; there was a hole under the face basin; and a damaged mirrored medicine cabinet.

Throughout the house the walls were in need of painting especially in the hallway near the phone where there were scratches in the wall. In the living room, a free standing safe attached to the floor needs painting.

The bedrooms are comfortable and personalized to each resident's desire. However, in bedroom number one there were scratches in the wall around the light switch and, in bedroom number two, the bed on the right side had a very hard mattress. In all the bedrooms, the dresser drawers were hard to open and in need of repair.

Although there was age-appropriate recreation equipment in the home the quantity was limited. A computer with a variety of programs, books, and resource material was available for residents' use.

The agency maintains a variety of fresh foods, as well as an adequate supply of frozen meats, vegetables and dry goods. Fresh snacks were available for residents and opened foods were properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. House of Bethesda management:**
 - a. Repair the hole around the pipe under the kitchen sink.**

- b. Remove the mildew in the resident bathroom.
- c. Repair the hole under the sink in the residents' bathroom.
- d. Repair the medicine cabinet in the resident bathroom.
- e. Repair and paint the walls throughout the facility as needed.
- f. Paint the floor safe in the living room.
- g. Replace the hard mattress in bedroom number two.
- h. Repair the dresser drawers in the resident bedrooms.
- i. Provide an adequate quantity of age-appropriate recreation equipment.

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents met House of Bethesda's population criteria as outlined in the program statement and received initial diagnostic assessments.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) were measurable, specific, attainable, and time limited. However, there was no documentation to indicate that one resident and his Probation Officer participated in the development of his NSP.

At the time of the review, neither resident had a Quarterly Report due. The residents are receiving weekly individual sessions. However, they are not receiving weekly group therapy sessions as required by the agency's Program Statement.

Recommendations

2. House of Bethesda management:

- a. Include each resident and their authorized representative in the development, updating, and modifying of the Needs and Service Plan.
- b. Provide residents group therapy sessions as required by the Program Statement.

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Although the residents stated that they attend school, there was no current documentation or report cards in their educational files. One resident had been identified as a special education student but did not have a current Individualized Education Plan.

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs but report that they do not receive daily living skills training in the home.

Recommendations

- 3. House of Bethesda management:**
 - a. Maintain educational documentation for all residents.**
 - b. Obtain a current Individualized Education Plan for each resident who requires one.**
 - c. Provide daily living skills training for all age-appropriate residents.**

IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

House of Bethesda has specific scheduled activities. The residents stated that the schedule is followed and that they are able to participate in the planning of the activities. The residents reported that there is free time in the home to do what they want and that staff provides transportation to and from activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. PSYCHOTROPIC/OTHER MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: There were four residents placed in the agency at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the two residents on psychotropic medication.

Comments:

House of Bethesda maintains appropriate medication logs, current authorizations, and psychiatric evaluations for the residents on medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents were presented with the policies, rules and regulations when arriving in placement. The residents stated that the rules are generally fair as are the consequences for not following them.

Resident chores include the maintenance of their own rooms and common areas which residents did not feel were too demanding.

Residents are able to have telephone contact with their placement workers and indicated that they can follow the religion of their choice or choose not to. The residents felt that their health care needs are being met and that the staff is culturally sensitive to each resident's background and ethnicity.

Both residents stated they were aware of their legal right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents' clothes were inventoried. One resident stated that he brought the majority of his clothing from home due to the staff not purchasing needed items for him. The clothing log does not reflect that the House of Bethesda purchased any of the items the resident owns. One resident is not receiving the minimum weekly allowance amount for his age as required by the Statement of Work. According to management staff, residents can earn additional money by doing extra chores around the facility such as washing the car or doing yard work. However, both residents reported that they did not want to do anything for extra money.

Clothing allowance and personal allowance logs are not organized to reflect the date, amount received, amount spent, and a balance for each resident. In addition, purchased clothing receipts are not kept with each individual resident's log as required by the Statement of Work.

House of Bethesda provides residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

Neither resident had a life book.

Recommendations

- 4. House of Bethesda management:**
 - a. Supply residents with the amount of clothing as established by the Department of Children and Family Services clothing standards.**
 - b. Provide residents with fifty dollars a month clothing allowance as required.**
 - c. Give each resident the age-appropriate required minimum amount weekly allowance for their age.**

- d. Organize clothing and personal allowance logs to reflect monthly amounts received, spent, and balance for each resident.**
- e. Provide each resident with the opportunity to maintain a life book.**